

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

29

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

212-216 Hunterdon Street

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Newark

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

___ VICINITY OF

10th

STATE

New Jersey

CODE

034

COUNTY

Essex

CODE

013

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

___ YES: RESTRICTED

☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED

___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

___ COMMERCIAL

☒ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

☒ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☒ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

☒ OTHER: Various**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

social activities

NAME

Archdiocese of Newark

STREET & NUMBER

31 Mulberry Street

CITY, TOWN

Newark

STATE

___ VICINITY OF

New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Essex County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER

469 High Street

CITY, TOWN

Newark

STATE

New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1977

___ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Trenton

STATE

New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR

St. Rocco Church, built on a tight sloping 75' x 100' site, is one of the few classical full-domed churches in Newark. Its corner stone having been laid in 1926, the basement church opened in March of 1927 and the upper church was dedicated May 9, 1937. It cost approximately \$75,000 to build.

The church, existing today exactly as it was originally built, is characterized by cream-colored brick, a granite foundation, and oak doors. Four Roman Corinthian columns, which support the lintels, adorn the front of the church. Decorative capitals in the Roman Corinthian style can be seen all around the outer facade of the church.

There are three niches in the front of the church, in the manner of Roman arches, each containing a statue and bronze plaques. The center statue commemorates the Church's patron saint, St. Rocco, while St. Nicholas and St. Cataldo adorn the side niches. These three statues were added to the church in the 1940s, under the leadership of Rev. Joseph De Sanctis.

The dome of the church is in the Roman basilica style. It consists of copper over stone masonry and was painted with black tar to prevent rain leakage. A belfry with a cross rests atop the dome.

A precisely-angled sloping gable roof, covered with tile, proceeds from the dome to the front of the church facing Hunterdon Street.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☒ RELIGION
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☒ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ 1700-1799	☒ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER
☐ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION
☒ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		☐ INVENTION		

Corner Stone - 1926

SPECIFIC DATES	Basement Church - 1927	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Neil J. Convery
	Upper Church - 1937		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ST. ROCCO'S CHURCH: THE ROCK IN THE STORM

ARCHITECTURE

St. Rocco Church is one of three Italian/Mediterranean churches which noted Newark (and Summit) architect Neil J. Convery had completed or underway by 1926-27. The other two churches of Convery's creation are St. Lucy's in the North Ward of Newark and Sacred Heart in Vailsburg section of Newark. It appears that Neil J. Convery's 1926-27 architectural plans for St. Rocco's were used to construct the upper church in 1937. While the actual architectural specifications for completion of St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church have not been located, Edward Carlin, Bond Counsel for the 1937 construction recalls that the architectural specifications were signed by three people - Father Umberto Donati, Neil J. Convery, and Ferrando Roszas.

As already noted, St. Rocco Church is one of the few full-domed churches in all of Newark.

Convery designed the church under the guidance of Rev. Umberto Donati, who served as St. Rocco's parish priest from 1916 to 1941. Donati wished St. Rocco to be a reproduction of St. Balsius' Church in Lendinara, Province of Rovigo, in Italy, which Father Donati had admired as a student forty years earlier. (Newark Evening News, June 6, 1930)

Byzantine as well as Classical influences typify the Venetian region. St. Rocco's as built, rings true to this historical fact. The Church is truly in the Italo-Byzantine style, in the manner of the grand canal churches of Venice. The basilica-type dome and the columns provide the classical element of the church, while the precisely-angled sloping gable roof in the front of the church attests to the Byzantine element.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .156

NJ

QUADRANGLE NAME Elizabeth-NY N4037.5-W7407.5-7.5

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 56814.0 45097.10
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

St. Rocco Church, according to Newark City Tax Records, is on Block 243, Lot 32, at 212-216 Hunterdon Street. The structure is 68' x 100'.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

Edited by the Office of Historic Preservation

NAME / TITLE

Frank E. Ferruggia, A.B. Princeton ('78); J.D. Harvard ('81)

ORGANIZATION

Parish Council Member, St. Rocco's Church

DATE

August, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

433 South 14 Street

TELEPHONE

(201) 622-4752 (6528)

CITY OR TOWN

Newark

STATE

New Jersey 07103

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XX

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

John Wilson

2-1-80

TITLE Deputy Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE *9-29-80*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

Description (continued)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE (continued)

INTERIOR

The interior of St. Rocco's Church is in an excellent state of repair. It has been very well maintained over the years.

Beautiful varieties of imported marble constitute the bases of the walls, the columns throughout the church, and the altar. Oak pews provide a seating capacity of approximately 750.

The main dome is supported by four semi-circular Roman arches, which are, in turn, supported by four square main-bearing marble columns with combination Corinthian-Ionic capitals at the top.

The main nave of the church is a barrel vault, as is the transept nave. Arches support angled roof.

A balcony proceeds from the semi-circular niche of the apse, which contains the altar, and continues almost completely around the church. One section of the balcony has an arch colonnade with eight different varieties of Italian marble. Beneath this balcony is a fine statue of the Madonna, with her Son, Jesus, lying at the bottom. Niches for statues are all around the church.

The main altar, made completely of marble, contains inlaid marble work depicting Christ surrounded by white lilies and roses. The two side altars contain a similar inlaid marble work. A Roman roof, capped by a dome and supported by twelve columns, houses the patron saint and caps the main altar.

(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET**ITEM NUMBER****PAGE**

Description (continued)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE (continued)ART WORK

Over the apse (the semi-circular dome over the altar) is a painting of a general religious scene depicting a Pope and several saints greeting Christ.

Four paintings on the dome depict the life of Christ: the Nativity, the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection of Christ from the tomb. At the top of the arches supporting the dome are paintings of the four evangelists who heralded the life of Christ in the Gospels.

On the ceiling of the main vault are circular paintings of Christ's agony in the garden and the raising of Lazarus.

All of these paintings were done by Luigi Aulicino. Apparently, he also did some private art work (of general religious scenes) for parishoners. One parishoner had an address that placed Aulicino in Long Island. Little else is known of him.

BASEMENT

St. Rocco's Church has a 12 foot basement where most of the Church's social, educational, and community activities take place. While the basement is sound in structure, its walls are not in good condition. Plaster, paint and several window replacements are needed.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

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Significance (continued)

ARCHITECTURE (continued)

Inside the church, the same combination exists. Classical columns support Roman arches, while arches inside the angled roof are characteristic of the Italo-Byzantine style.

The architectural design of St. Rocco's Church is not bastardized or eclectic. It is a product of the Venetian region; both Palladian Classical and Byzantine influences coexist. St. Rocco's is not neo-Italian modern, but clearly period architecture in the true Italian spirit of quaint, picturesque architecture.

Its dome, its architect, and its historical connection with a prototype in Italy all combine to make St. Rocco's Church truly a landmark in both immigrant and New Jersey history.

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN/RELIGION

Since St. Rocco's Church is a focal point in the Central Ward of Newark, it also serves and has served as a beacon for those who need help, both spiritual and physical.

St. Rocco's Parish was legally incorporated on November 6, 1899 in response to the growing Italian population in Newark's old 14th Ward. Besides the Silver Lake, 1st Ward, and Ironbound areas, the 14th Ward was a major area of Italian settlement in Newark. The incorporation of a parish is significant in that it represents social and numerical importance and the recognition of same by the Church hierarchy. As one author puts it, the incorporation of St. Rocco parish meant that the 14th Ward colony of Italians had become "large and important enough" to have its own church. (Charles W. Churchill, The Italians of Newark pp. 26-27.)

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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

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Significance (continued)

In those early days, the parish was led by its founder pastor, Rev. James Zuccarelli. After a fire destroyed their storefront church at Morris and 14th Avenues, the parish moved to a similar structure at 9 Bedford Street.

Under the leadership of Rev. Umberto Donati, who served St. Rocco from 1916 to 1941, the parish established its central location on Hunterdon Street and 14th Avenue that it occupies today. In March of 1927, the basement church opened, while ten years later, on May 9, 1937, the upper church structure was dedicated.

In 1941, Rev. Joseph De Sanctis took over the helm of St. Rocco's Church. It was under his leadership that the church burned its mortgage, added the statues to the front niches of the church, and altered the basement to serve as a recreation center for young people.

With the decline of Italian parishoners, who in the late 1950's and 1960's joined the movement of population to the suburbs, the growth in Black and Hispanic parishoners presented a challenge equal to the needs of the early ethnics.

Today, the vibrancy of religious devotion continues. Masses in Italian, English, and Spanish fill the Church's auditorium each Sunday. And a "Friends of St. Rocco" Committee, organized by one of our more famous parishoners, NJ Banking Commissioner Angelo Bianchi, each year sponsors a fund-raising dinner-dance that is attended by the diverse elements of the St. Rocco community, past and present.

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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

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Significance (continued)

Also under the leadership of Fr. Fuino, the Church expanded its services to the community in 1956 by opening, on September 9th, a school on Ashland Street. On an adjoining site, a two-story convent was also constructed. From that site, Fillipinin Sisters joined the struggle to educate and serve the community. Today, St. Rocco school continues to serve the needs of its 225 enrolled children.

The basement of St. Rocco's Church serves as a center of vital community benefits:

1. The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program distributes supplemental food checks to pregnant mothers. WIC, a state-funded program, also provides pre-natal medical care to pregnant mothers in the area.

2. The Hunterdon Street Neighborhood Council uses the basement for its operations. During the summer, remedial educational programs are offered, recreation activities take place, and government-provided lunches are supplied to children of the area.

3. After Mass on Sundays, the basement is the site for the sharing of coffee, donuts, and fellowship.

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St. Rocco's Roaman Catholic Church, Essex County, NJ

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Newark Evening News. April 21, 1937, June 6, 1930.

Churchill, Charles W., The Italians of Newark, Ph.D. Thesis, New York University,
1942 (pp. 27-27).

Letter of Neil Convery to Archdiocese of Newark. August 12, 1936.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Bibliograph

Item number

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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church
Newark, Essex County
New Jersey

Newark Evening News. "St. Rocco's Church Dedication." April 21, 1937.

Letter from Neil J. Convery to Rev. Thomas MacLaughlin, August 12, 1936.

Letter from Chancellor to Rev. Umberto Donati, October 7, 1936.

Letter from Chancellor to Neil Convery, October 14, 1936.

Letters of payment from Reverend Umberto Donati to Neil Convery, May 26, June 27, 1926
and September 26, 1927.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church
Newark, Essex County
New Jersey

ADDENDA

There are several indications that Neil Convery's 1926-27 architectural plans and specifications for St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church in Newark were the actual drawings used when the church was finally constructed in 1937.

Although a careful search for the original or working plans and specifications has not been successful, Edward Carlin remembers that three people had signed the final plans for construction in 1937. Carlin, a professional Bond Counsel at the time with his father, recollects the names of Umberto Donati, Neil J. Convery, and Ferrando Roszas on the contract. Father Donati was the church pastor; Roszas the construction contractor; and Convery, the architect. It is unlikely that Convery made any major modifications to his depression interrupted drawings.

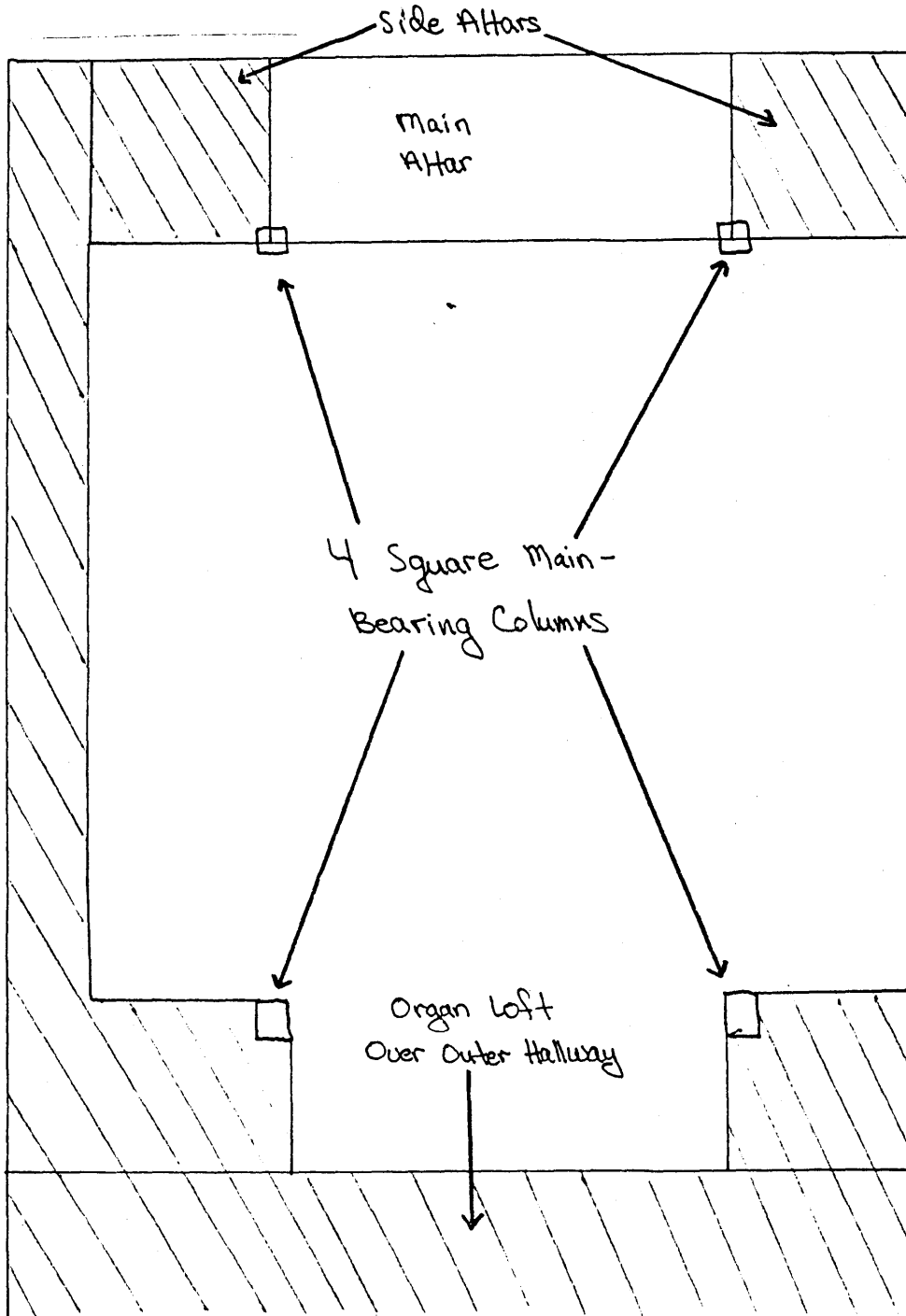
Additional corroboration that St. Rocco's was constructed using Convery's 1926-27 plans comes from Monsignor Seymour of the Newark Chancery Office. Msgr. Seymour recalls that the entire church was completed according to Convery's original drawings. Further evidence are letters of correspondence from Reverend Umberto Donati and Neil Convery in 1936 which discusses an additional payment, but which is not substantial enough to be major revisions to the original plans for which Convery was paid in several payments.

Based on the written evidence and personal recollections of those connected with the pastorate, St. Rocco's was probably constructed using Neil Convery's 1927-27 architectural plans and specifications. While it is quite likely that there were some modifications to these plans in 1936 during actual construction, it would seem to be limited to minor features rather than the overall concept of the design.

St. ROCCO'S CHURCH
NEWARK, NJ

North
↑

FEB 29 1980



100'

FOURTEENTH AVENUE

75'

HUNTERDON STREET

[Hatched area] denotes parts of church over which the balcony and choir lofts run



St. Rocco's Roman Catholic
Church, Newark, Essex County NJ

Date: 1979

Negative location: NJ OHP

Dome - view from Jones Street
facing west

SEP 29 1980

FEB 29 1980



NO
PARKING
OR
STANDING
9AM TO
12 NOON
↔

ONLY
STREET CLEANING

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

Newark, Essex County, NJ

Date: 1979

SEP 29 1980

Negative Location: NJ OHP

Exterior FEB 29 1980



ST ROCCO
DONATED BY
VALLATESI
AND
FLUMERESI
AND
DEVOTELS

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic
Church, Newark, Essex County NJ

Date: 1979

Negative location: NJ OHP

Close-up of front of Church

Statue of St. Rocco SEP 29 1980

FEB 29 1980



St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

Newark, Essex County, NJ

Date: 1979

Negative Location: NJ OHP

Interior

FEB 29 1980

SEP 29 1980



St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

Newark, Essex County, NJ

SEP 29 1980

Date: 1979

Negative Location: NJ OHP

Interior

FEB 29 1980



SEP 29 1980

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic
Church, Newark, Essex County NJ

Date: 1979

Negative location: NJ OHP

Interior

FEB 29 1980



Newark, Essex County NJ

St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

Date: 1979

Negative location: NJ OHP

Interior dome

SEP 29 1980
FEB 29 1980



St. Rocco's Roman Catholic Church

Newark, Essex County, NJ 29 1980

Date: 1979

Negative location: NJ OHP

Interior FEB 29 1980